

### Zimbabwe Developments

#### Acknowledging Gender Equality Advancements in Zimbabwe in Support of March 8, 2021 International Women's Day

The Zimbabwean government applauds International Women's Day and the strides and advances women have made around the world. To that end, we would like to highlight several steps to promote women's empowerment and economic development.

First Lady Auxilia Mnangagwa has made it a top priority to promote gender equality in Zimbabwe, working through the Angel of Hope Foundation to combat domestic violence, educate young girls, promote female entrepreneurship, and fight against childhood cancer. The First Lady, who was named the Ministry of Health and Child Care's Ambassador for Maternal and Child Health, also launched the National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination campaign to immunize more than 800,000 adolescent girls from HPV.

Last year, the Zimbabwean Supreme Court ruled that women are granted equal property rights to men if their marriage is registered as a legal union with the government. This strengthened property rights for Zimbabwean women, who previously lost property rights if the marriage ended in divorce or death. The Zimbabwean government also made it illegal for schools to expel pregnant students, helping provide more equitable access to education. Civil society groups like the Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD) have further complimented the government's efforts to expand gender equity across the country.

Additionally, the Alliance for Financial Inclusion recently released a [report](#) noting improvements Zimbabwe has made in the recent years in promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion. In Zimbabwe, 57 percent of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are owned by women. In addition, Zimbabwean banks have increased loans to MSMEs, provided more direct credit access to women, and aimed to increase access to affordable and appropriate formal financial services to disadvantaged groups from 69 percent in 2014 to at least 90 percent by 2020.

Below are highlights from several of the most notable independent press reports on Zimbabwe's recent gender equality efforts.

[Forbes](#): Mobilizing Zimbabwe's Young Women's Social Standing Beyond Patriarchal Boundaries – January 21, 2021

- Zimbabwean Glanis Changachirere founded the Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD) in 2009 to reverse societal disregard for investing in young girls' and women's safety, education and future.
- Today, IYWD is a movement of 7,000 young women members across rural and mining communities of the over 14 million populated southern African landlocked country.
- Changachirere arranged a partnership with the Provincial Government and secured a Memorandum of Understanding that provided IYWD a license to operate as part of the Provincial pandemic awareness task force. Within months, the government temporarily provided water and electricity during daytime, resumed garbage collection, and reopened health clinics.
- The IYWD is working with the Zimbabwe Gender Commission to introduce a Gender Equality Bill to challenge cultural inequalities and injustices that young women suffer.

[Voice of America](#): Zimbabwe's Women Making Progress in Fight for Property Rights – January 27, 2021

- Last year, the Zimbabwe Supreme Court made a ruling that granted women the right to equal property - if the marriage is registered as a legal union with the government.
- This means that women will now have right to property if their marriages end in death or divorce of their spouse.
- Hilda Mahumucha, a representative of the Women Lawyers of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe, said "this has been a development in the positive direction, especially for women who had been disadvantaged for years. Most of our clients who visited our offices expressed their confidence in the judiciary system, especially with regard to their right to protection, which is a constitutional right.

[Reuters](#): Zimbabwe Makes It Illegal For Schools To Expel Pregnant Girls – August 25, 2020

- Zimbabwe has made it illegal for schools to expel pupils who get pregnant, a measure women's rights campaigners said would help tackle gender inequality in the classroom and stop many girls from dropping out of school.
- Cain Manema, the education minister in charge of schools, told Reuters, "'I'm expecting every parent and guardian and everyone else to understand that every child must be assisted by all of us to go to school."
- In 2018, 12.5 percent of the country's roughly 57,500 school dropouts stopped attending classes due to pregnancy or marriage reasons - almost all of them girls.